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Re-assessing the Nature of the Global War on Terrorism and the Application of the Center of Gravity Concept in the War

By

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A paper submitted to the faculty of the Naval War College in partial satisfaction of the requirements of the Department of Joint Military Operations.

The contents of this paper reflect my own personal views and are not necessarily endorsed by the Naval War College or the Department of the Navy.

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(14 February 2005)

Abstract

As history has shown, it is important to correctly identify the nature of a war in which one is engaged so that an appropriate strategy can be developed to win the war. As the United States enters the fourth year in the Global War on Terrorism (GWOT), it is important to examine three issues that are crucial for winning the war: first a re-assessment of the GWOT as a war against global insurgency rather than a war against terrorism; second, an analysis of the concept of the center of gravity as it relates to the GWOT; and third, an examination of potential enemy and friendly centers of gravity an their impact on the conduct of the war.

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I. INTRODUCTION

The attacks against the United States on September 11, 2001 should have forced many Americans and their elected leaders to realize that the old rules that had been followed by adversaries during the Cold War no longer applied in the new millennium. In October 2001, the United States began a Global War on Terrorism (GWOT) to destroy those forces who directly, or indirectly, supported the September 11 attacks or posed a threat to American interests throughout the world. As in any war, one of the components required for success is the need to correctly identify the nature of the war. Then, as the war progresses the nature and aims of the war must be re-assessed periodically to ensure that the direction the war is taking is based on the correct identification of the nature of the war. As America enters its fourth year in the GWOT, I think that a re-assessment of the war is necessary as the United States is involved in a prolonged conflict with a determined enemy that is not governed by the normal constraints that most Americans would associate with previous wars. At this point, I feel that it is important to examine three issues that are critical to winning this war: first, a re-assessment of the GWOT as a war against global insurgency rather than a war against terrorism; second, how the concept of the center of gravity is as applicable in this war as it has been in other wars; and third, an analysis of possible enemy and friendly centers of gravity. Through this examination of the GWOT, I hope to point out some possible shortcomings of current U.S. strategy and provide possible alternatives that could be followed to ensure victory in the shortest time and at the lowest possible cost.

II. RE-ASSESSING THE NATURE OF THE GLOBAL WAR ON TERRORISM

One of the most important and sometimes most difficult tasks to accomplish during a war is the proper identification of the nature of the war. President Bush's administration has gone to great lengths to clearly identify the nature of the GWOT in the *National Security Strategy of the United States of America* (NSS) and the *National Strategy for Combating Terrorism* (NSCT).[1] The NSS states that the U.S. is fighting "a war against terrorists of global reach. The enemy is not a single political regime or person or religion or ideology. The enemy is terrorism - premeditated, politically motivated violence perpetrated against innocents."[2] The NSCT similarly states that "the enemy is not one person. It is not a single political regime. Certainly it is not a religion. The enemy is terrorism - premeditated, politically motivated violence perpetrated against noncombatant targets by subnational groups or clandestine agents."[3] And, according to the NSCT, the goal of the U.S. "will be reached when Americans and other civilized people around the world can lead their lives free of fear from terrorist attacks."[4] In these documents, the nature of the GWOT is described as a war against terrorism and the enemy is terrorism and its supporters. As one writer has explained, "the global war on terrorism is...not only a war against practitioners of terrorism but also against the phenomenon of terrorism itself. The goal is the elimination of both terrorists and the method of violence they employ."[5] Although this characterization of the nature of the war is important in understanding one particular aspect of the war, I will argue that it

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[1] National Security Strategy (Washington D.C., September 2002) and National Strategy for Combating Terrorism (Washington, D.C., February 2003).
[2] National Security Strategy, 5.
[3] National Strategy for Combating Terrorism, 1
[4] Ibid, 1.
[5] Record, Jeffrey, "Bounding the Global War on Terrorism," (Carlisle, PA: Strategic Studies Institute, 2003), 19.

does not accurately define the nature of the war as it in fact confuses the correct nature of

the war which I will argue is a religiously-motivated worldwide global insurgency. Thus,

GWOT should be seen as a campaign within the larger global war on insurgency, not as

the war in itself.

III. THE NATURE OF THE WAR AND THE ENEMY

One problem with the current approach to the GWOT is that it confuses the nature of the war and too narrowly defines the enemy as terrorism and terrorists. One problem with this approach is that "'Terrorism' is a tactic, not an opponent"[6] and terrorism "is not the type of thing against which a state or an alliance can 'wage war,'...Terrorism is not an entity...It is an activity."[7] So, instead of clarifying the nature of the war, declaring a global war on terrorism misses the point of the nature of the war. To rectify this situation, the U.S. should not target terrorism itself, but the motivation for the numerous attacks against the U.S. like the bombing of the Khobar Towers and the U.S. embassies in Kenya and Tanzania, the attack on the USS Cole, and the September 11 attacks. To the perpetrators of these actions, these attacks are acts of war against America and the West. The U.S. also needs to realize that this is a war between a religiously motivated Islamist ideology and the western world - of which the U.S. is the champion. This approach is counter to the definitions of the war and the enemy as described in the NSS and the NSCT.

Also, the U.S. needs to avoid treating Osama bin Laden as just a terrorist or just the leader of a terrorist organization because he sees himself as the leader of this ideological war between radical Islamism and the West. And, it is important to note that for the past ten years, he has been trying to spread the this war to all of the Muslim world through "al Qaeda's radical ideology"[8] that threatens American interests around the

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[6] Biddle, Stephen, <u>Defeating Terrorism: Strategic Issues Analysis</u> (U.S. Army War College Strategic Studies Institute, January 2002, Reprint: Newport, RI: 2004, Naval War College, Joint Military Operations Department, NWC 3030), 8.

[7] Conetta, Carl, "Dislocating Alcyoneus: How to Combat Al Qaeda and the New Terrorism" (The Project on Defense Alternatives, *www.comw.org/pda/0206dislocate.html,* 2002, Reprint: Newport, RI: 2004, Naval War College, Joint Military Operations Department, NWC 3011), 1.

[8] Biddle, 7.

world. As Osama bin Laden and the other leaders of al Qaeda see this war, they know that the best way to spread this ideological war is not through random acts of terror, but through "a worldwide anti-U.S. insurgency"[9] that attempts to draw the 1.3 billion Muslims of the world into a jihad. If the U.S. fails to see that Osama bin Laden, and his fellow radical Islamists, perceive this war as much more than a series of terrorist events, then we will not be able to correctly identify the nature of the war. Consequently, we will prolong the war and raise the cost of victory for the U.S. It is al Qaeda's "*ideology* [emphasis added] - and the malign intent this creates and embodies - that pose the real threat."[10]

As stated earlier, Osama bin Laden wants to spread his call to jihad through an insurgency. Joint Publication 1-02 defines insurgency as "an organized movement aimed at the overthrow of a constituted government through the use of subversion and armed conflict."[11] It is this armed conflict that Osama bin Laden wants to initiate throughout the Muslim world and he has set-up the perfect organization in al Qaeda to do so because it

> is an insurgent, vice terrorist, organization [that] has two primary, manpower-intensive missions: to provide quality insurgent training to Muslims from around the world, and to build an ample cadre of veteran fighters who can be sent to foreign legion-like wherever militant Islam needs them.[12]

If we look at the nature of the war as an insurgency, then we can effectively wage a counterinsurgency by using all of the assets of national power available, with the military in the lead, to win the war. If we continue to view it as a war on terrorism, the U.S. risks completely misunderstanding the nature of the war our enemy is fighting which, as I will explain, limits our effectiveness and ability to win the war.

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[9] Anonymous, <u>Imperial Hubris</u> (Washington, D.C., Brassey's, 2004), 246.
[10] Biddle, 8.
[11] Joint Publication 1-02, 260.
[12] Anonymous, 62.

IV. U.S. GOALS

The current U.S. goal that "Americans and other civilized people around the world can lead their lives free of fear from terrorist attacks"[13] is a noble idea, which can be realized, but only if we are willing to defeat the Islamic insurgency that uses terrorism as a tactic to win the war. Seen in this light, fighting a war on terrorism is the wrong war to fight because it will limit the resources available to fight the war. The problem that arises when we choose to fight a war of counterterrorism rather than counterinsurgency is revealed in the argument that the GWOT is analogous to the war on illegal drugs. This argument contends that, like the drug war, the GWOT should be fought with police work in the lead and the military in a supporting role.[14] This view too narrowly defines the global insurgency that has different motivations, goals, and aims than those whom the U.S. is fighting in the war on drugs or whom the U.S. would be fighting in a war on terrorism.

Another problem of fighting the global insurgency as the drug war, or even a counterterrorism war, is that it could allow a "law enforcement mentality to [infect] the …conduct on the war on terror"[15] which confines a large part of the war to police work, which, though important, should take a back seat to the military effort in a counterinsurgency. Furthermore, the best way to win a global war is to use all aspects of U.S. national power, in this instance with the military in the lead - not at the expense of the other instruments of national power - but first in the fight so that we are not

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[13] National Strategy for Combating Terrorism, 1.
[14] Record, 3.
[15] Anonymous, 69.

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unexpectedly caught with a "knife in a gunfight"[16] as some have suggested could happen.

Daniel Byman furthers this point when he states that:

> the concept [of a war on terrorism] is not useful in structuring a campaign against al-Qaeda...[most] terrorist groups like Germany's Red Army Faction…are small and limited in their scope: unlike al-Qaeda, they do not pose a global threat, are not innovative, and lack the ability to recuperate if their leaders are killed or arrested. Even larger and more capable groups like the Provisional Irish Republican Army are far smaller and more geographically focused in their activities than al-Qaeda…When fighting al-Qaeda, the lessons of counterinsurgency may prove more useful than those of counterterrorism, particularly when fighting al-Qaeda among hostile populations or where the rule of law is weak.[17]

Byman continues that with the current wars in Iraq and Afghanistan, the enemy that we are fighting is "part of a larger insurgency."[18]

But what evidence do we have that supports the assertion that Osama bin Laden seeks to lead such an insurgency? The best place to look is at what can be considered Osama bin Laden and the radical Islamists' goals which can be summarized as grievances against:

> U.S. support for Israel...U.S. and other Western troops [presence] on the Arabian Peninsula...U.S. occupation of Iraq and Afghanistan...U.S. support for Russia, India, and China against their Muslim militants...U.S. pressure on Arab energy producers to keep oil prices low...U.S. support for apostate, corrupt, and tyrannical Muslim governments.[19]

Contrary to what many believe, overthrowing America is not listed and some even suggest that overthrowing America is counter to the Islamists' goals, since this fundamentalist movement does not seek to overthrow America or the American way of life in America. Rather, it seeks to remove all Western influence, of which America is seen as the promoter and protector in Muslim countries. The importance of

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[16] Kern, Tony, "America's Center of Gravity" (*The Officer,* Vol 77, No.9, October 2001, 29-30), 29.
[17] Byman, Daniel, "Al-Qaeda as an Adversary: Do We Understand Our Enemy?" (*World Politics*, October 2003, 139-163, Reprint: Newport, RI: 2004, Naval War College, Strategy and Policy Department), 160.
[18] Ibid.
[19] Anonymous, 241.

understanding these goals is directly related to the importance that Osama bin Laden

places on the insurgency since he can only realize his goals with the help of his

constituency: the 1.3 billion Muslims in the world who possess the manpower necessary

to make these goals a reality. In this context, all of the al Qaeda inspired attacks against

America, and specifically the September 11 attacks, can be seen as an acts of war to

galvanize Muslim support for the Islamic insurgency by daring to defy the seemingly

invincible power of the United States. Although the U.S. has had some tremendous

successes in the GWOT, some see the wars in Afghanistan and Iraq as the key battlefields

in which the war for the will of moderate Muslims will be waged. I agree with Thomas

Donnelly and Vance Sechuk, who state in "Fighting a Global Counterinsurgency" that

"the American military finds itself entrenched in a host of…counterinsurgency

campaigns across the Muslim world. These guerrilla conflicts have become...the

operational reality that defines the global war on terror."[20] It is this operational reality

and our ability to deal with it that will determine the ultimate outcome and cost of the

war. With this operational reality in mind, I would now like to turn attention to the

application of the concept of the center of gravity in the global war on insurgency.

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[20]Donnelly, Thomas and Vance Sechuk, "Fighting a Global Counterinsurgency" (*National Security Outlook,* December 1, 2003, 1-4), 1.

V. THE CENTER OF GRAVITY IN THE WAR ON GLOBAL INSURGENCY

If, as suggested, the nature of the current war is a worldwide insurgency, does the concept of the center of gravity apply to an enemy like Osama bin Laden, al Qaeda, and similar organizations that do not possess those strengths or weaknesses that the U.S. usually easily identifies to attack and destroy? The answer is yes - we just have to search a little bit harder to find and destroy them.

Naturally, some may question the validity of using the center of gravity concept to determine the best way to defeat an enemy that even Carl von Clausewitz probably did not envision when he discussed this concept in On War.[21] Some argue that our enemies do not have a "center of gravity in the traditional sense - no economy, no homeland, no power grids, no regular military"[22] and that there is no "center of gravity to strike with precision weapons;"[23] and they could be correct because the radical Islamic enemy is essentially a non-state, de-centralized, insurgency that operates in isolated cells in different locations and may not have a single strength or weakness that is vulnerable to attack.

However, I disagree with these arguments because the concept of the center of gravity applies in all wars; whether conventional or unconventional, to all enemies; whether state or non-state actors; and to all organizations that possess strengths and weaknesses. Furthermore, just because it may be difficult to locate a center of gravity, does not make it any less important than in previous wars to locate it and this certainly does not mean that it does not exist in this one.

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[21]Clausewitz, Carl Von, On War (Edited and translated by Michael Howard and Peter Paret, Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1976), 595-596.
[22] Anonymous, 263.
[23] Kern, 29.

VI. THE CENTER OF GRAVITY DEFINED

A review of current joint and service publications will lead one to conclude that even though the various definitions of the center of gravity are not in violent disagreement with one another, they are certainly not unified in their approach to defining this important concept. This inconsistency becomes particularly problematic when we attempt to determine the answer to such an important question as the enemy's center of gravity. In this paper I will not argue about the "correct" definition of the center of gravity, because there are plenty of good arguments that already exist on this subject[24] so I will use the definition as developed by Dr. Joe Strange in his monograph, Centers of Gravity and Critical Vulnerabilities: Building on the Clausewitzian Foundation So That We Can All Speak the Same Language and expanded upon in his further work, "Understanding Centers of Gravity and Critical Vulnerabilities."

Essentially, Dr. Strange's explanation states that all centers of gravity will have critical capabilities that give the center of gravity the ability to do something and critical requirements exist that are necessary to support these critical capabilities. Usually, the critical requirements possess critical vulnerabilities or weaknesses that may be susceptible to attack which may ultimately weaken or destroy the center of gravity. This approach to the center of gravity is usually represented by: CG - CC - CR - CV where each element leads to or is related to the next. The key issue in this approach is the importance of determining a vital enemy strength that must be destroyed to defeat it. Dr. Strange argues that "Clausewitz intended the center of gravity to be a strength,"[25] which

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[24] Several authors who have written on this subject include Echevarria, Kern, Mallory, and Reilly whose pertinent work is included in the bibliography.
[25] Strange, Joe and Richard Iron, "Understanding Centers of Gravity and Critical Vulnerabilities" (*www.tecom.usmc.mil/cce/student/pme/csc,* 2004), 4.

Clausewitz defined as "the hub of all power and movement, on which everything depends."[26]. Figure 1 provides the definitions of each of the elements that make up the center of gravity concept in Dr. Strange's construct.

Figure 1: CG-CC-CR-CV Concept as presented by Dr. Joe Strange[27]

Center of Gravity (CG): Physical or moral entities that are the <u>primary</u> [authors' emphasis] components of physical or moral strength, power and resistance. **They don't just contribute to strength; they ARE the strength** [authors' emphasis]. They offer resistance. They strike effective (or heavy) physical or moral blows. At the strategic level, they are usually leaders and populations determined to prevail. At operational and tactical levels they are almost invariably specific military forces.

Critical Capabilities (CC): Every center of gravity has some primary ability (or abilities) that makes it a center of gravity in the context of a given scenario, situation or mission - including phases within campaigns or operations.

Critical Requirements (CR): Conditions, resources and means that are essential for a center of gravity to achieve its critical capability.

Critical Vulnerabilities (CV): Those critical requirements or components thereof, that are deficient, or vulnerable to neutralization or defeat in a way that will contribute to a center of gravity failing to achieve its critical capability.

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[26] Clausewitz, 595 - 596.
[27] Strange and Iron, 1-7.

VII. PROPOSED ENEMY CENTER OF GRAVITY AND ANALYSIS

As stated before, Osama bin Laden seeks to lead a worldwide anti-U.S. insurgency to attain his goals. Thankfully, since there are not enough extremists available to fulfill his goals themselves, he will have to elicit assistance from the rest of the Muslim world because in his words: "'We are seeking to incite the Islamic nation to rise up to liberate its land and to conduct Jihad for the sake of God'."[28]

In relation to this important goal, Stephen Biddle states that the "the hearts and minds of politically uncommitted Muslims are the center of gravity"[29] as they are not yet involved in the jihad that Osama bin Laden has initiated. The real strength of the radical Islamist effort - the very cornerstone of the jihad, is based on the ability to energize the majority of the Muslim population to join it. This is bin Laden's attempt to raise his own *levee en masse* from the Muslim world to carry the fight to the infidels. Consequently, if he can get the will of 1.3 billion Muslims to assist him, he and those who share his beliefs will truly be a global force of significant strength.

Obviously, an all-inclusive list of the multiple centers of gravity would require a far more detailed treatment than allowed in this paper and it is beyond the scope of this paper to examine each center of gravity and the accompanying elements. The information given below, and as represented in Tables 1 and 2, is meant to generate discussion about the recommendations for possible enemy and friendly centers of gravity in the current war.

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[28] Conetta, 1.
[29] Biddle, 7.

Center of Gravity: The popular support, or will, of the majority of the 1.3 billion Muslims in the world.	Critical Capabilities: - Removal of secular Muslim governments, - Elimination of Israel - Expansion of war to all Arabs - Establishment of a pan-Islamic caliphate in all predominantly Muslim countries - Provide large numbers of recruits to replace losses - Attack and destroy American and Western interests all over the world
Critical Requirements: - Media, especially the Internet. - U.S. maintain *status quo* foreign policies. - Keep U.S. fighting Muslims forces. - Strong leadership. - Religious authority to legitimize insurgent actions. - Attainment of WMD. - Recruits. - Money.	Critical Vulnerabilities: -Time - Legitimacy - Globalization - Democratization - Enfranchisement of Muslim middle class. - Recruits. - Resolution of Arab-Israeli conflict[30]

Table 1: Enemy Center of Gravity

Center of Gravity: The popular support, or will, of the majority of the 1.3 billion Muslim people in the world.

Critical Capabilities:

- The removal of secular Muslim governments currently in power. That many of these governments have a relationship with the U.S. adds to the radicals' desire to replace the regimes with ones similar to the Taliban that follows a strict interpretation of the Koran to govern.

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[30] Strange and Iron, 19.

- Launch an attack against Israel to remove the Jewish state from the Middle East. Obviously, there would be significant opposition to this action, but with the mobilization of all of the Muslims in the Middle East, it is a possibility.

- Recruit large numbers of Muslims to replace the losses of those killed in insurgency and global war. As long as the radical Islamists have enough insurgents they will continue fighting and spreading their message to the Muslim world.

- Attack and destroy American interests all over the world. As we have seen before, the al Qaeda inspired attacks against American targets throughout the world leads to questions about how we can protect our interests and usually has a significant impact on our actions in some parts of the world.

Critical Requirements:

- The media and specifically the Internet which may be the most important medium for al Qaeda to use to spread its message.[31]

- The ability to show the desire of non-Muslims to attack any Muslims. As stated before, the current Muslim vs. non-Muslim wars that are occurring in places like Afghanistan, Iraq, China, and Russia demonstrate to the radical Islamists that non-Muslim countries are engaged in a war to eradicate Muslims all over the world. By using these wars as examples of non-Muslim oppression, the radical Islamists hope to gain more credibility for their cause.

- Strong leadership for the radical Islamic movement that keeps Muslims focused on the current war rather than domestic squabbles.[32] Many people feel that Osama bin Laden currently provides the leadership required to keep the radicals focused on fighting the

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[31] Anonymous writes, "Al Qaeda's most important growth since the 11 September attacks has not been physical but has been, rather, its expansion into the Internet." (78-79)

[32] Ibid, 139.

U.S. and not each other. When Osama bin Laden is eventually killed, it will be interesting to see if another figure can provide this leadership.

- The attainment of Weapons of Mass Destruction (WMD) which will empower the Muslim people against non-Muslim foes. Osama bin Laden sees the attainment of WMD as a religious duty and, whether we think that they are credible or not, he has received the religious blessings that he, and many radical Islamists feel, are required to use WMD against non-Muslims.[33]

- War in Afghanistan and Iraq to show that U.S. can be defeated if it is forced to pull out of either country before stable governments can be established. This important requirement adds even more weight to the importance to the operations that are occurring in these countries and a clear U.S. victory in each case would be detrimental to the radicals' efforts.

- U.S. maintaining *status quo* foreign policies that polarize much of the Muslim population against the U.S. It is these foreign policies that Anonymous sees as providing the largest motivation for the radical Islamists to fight and the greatest possibility of gaining the moderate Muslims to join the jihad.[34]

Critical Vulnerabilities:

- Time can work for and against both sides of this conflict. The longer the U.S. fights in Afghanistan and Iraq, the greater the chance the Muslims could join the jihad against the U.S. But, time could be a critical vulnerability for the radical Islamists if the wars in Afghanistan and Iraq prove that America can establish free and stable governments in both places.

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[33]For an in-depth discussion of this issue, see Anonymous, 154 - 158.
[34] Ibid, 207, 222.

- Legitimacy - if the radical Islamists do not speak for the entire Muslim world and the rest of the Muslim world turns away from their message. If, religious edicts are written that allow the use of WMD against non-Muslims, the seriousness of such an attack against America could jeopardize any attempts to gain legitimacy from the moderate Muslims.

- Resolution of Arab-Israeli conflict[35] could remove much of the impetus for fighting against the non-Muslim world. President Bush has stated that he would like to see the creation of a Palestinian state before the end of his term.[36] Of course, for many radical Islamists, even this compromise is unacceptable.

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[35] This concept is fairly well documented; one such example can be found in Strange and Iron, 19.
[36] Reported in an article about Israel's response to Palestinian policies against violence, by Steven Erlanger of the *New York Times*, as printed in the *Providence Journal*, 29 January 2005.

VIII. PROPOSED FRIENDLY CENTER OF GRAVITY AND ANALYSIS

Some have suggested that the leaders of al Qaeda have determined that America's center of gravity is our economy which al Qaeda is determined to attack it.[37] Although I would not argue against this possible center of gravity, I consider the U.S. armed forces as the friendly center of gravity because of its enormous capabilities in the GWOT.

Center of Gravity: Armed Forces of the United States.	**Critical Capability**: - Enforce U.S. policy - Protect U.S. homeland and interests from attack. - Conduct counterinsurgency operations, support states that further U.S. policies. - Deter potential recruits from joining the insurgency. - Remove states or non-states that promote insurgency or terrorism.
Critical Requirements: - Correct identification of the nature of the war. - Policy and strategy match. - Unified national leadership. - Strong economy.	**Critical Vulnerabilities**: - Will of elected politicians. - Certain segments of economy. - Arab - Israeli conflict. - The monetary cost of fighting the war.

Table 2: Friendly Center of Gravity

Center of Gravity: The U.S. armed forces and its ability to project military power around the world.

Critical Capabilities:

- Enforce U.S. policies throughout the world. While the military is only one aspect of an impressive array of national powers, it is often the most effective when it is used and it is fair to say that the U.S. military has very few - if any - peers in conventional warfare.

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[37] Anonymous 101, Colman 13.

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- Conduct counterinsurgency operations. The U.S. military is trained and prepared to conduct counterinsurgency operations. Despite many protests to the contrary that U.S. service members are ill-trained or equipped to fight a counterinsurgency, they are doing so, all over the world. Some of the operations, like Afghanistan and Iraq are large scale counterinsurgency operations, while other operations in Indonesia and other parts of the world are much smaller, but no less effective than the large-scale operations. So, a massive re-tooling of the military is not needed to fight a counterinsurgency. Of course, efficiencies can be gained from re-structuring units that may not be necessary if we decide that we are not going to need to fight a major conventional war, but the fundamentals for winning a counterinsurgency do exist and are being applied daily in this war.[38]

- Support states that further U.S. policies. As we have seen in the past, the American military can be used to support governments, or even regimes, that support U.S. policies. Often, the military does not even need to be physically involved with a belligerent: rather, it can serve as a deterrent to let an aggressor know that the U.S. will not look favorably on aggressive actions against an ally or friend.

- Deter potential recruits from joining the jihad. The armed forces can perform this action in many ways and one way is to kill those who currently support the insurgencies in Afghanistan, Iraq, or other parts of the world. Another way is to deter those who may consider taking up arms against the U.S. by demonstrating that it is very dangerous to engage U.S. forces whose lethality is well-known by radical groups around the world. While this lethality may not deter extreme hardliners who willingly die for the radical

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[38] For an excellent discussion of American involvement in counterinsurgency operations in the rest of the world, see Donnelly and Sechuk.

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Islamic cause, it can deter those who may not be so excited about fighting, and dying, for the cause.

- Remove states, non-states, or regimes that harbor or promote insurgency or terrorism. Since October 2001, the U.S. has removed the regimes of Afghanistan and Iraq which had previously acted with impunity in the face of United Nation sanctions and international condemnation. But, with the declaration of war against terrorism and a changing of the way the U.S. has dealt with acts of war over the last ten years, the leadership of these countries was replaced and the path to democracy is on its way to being attained.

Critical Requirements:

- Correct identification of the nature of the current war. As stated throughout this paper, an incorrect assessment of the nature of the current war will only lead to a misunderstanding of its conduct and increase the cost of eventual victory for the U.S.

- Policy and strategy match. As tied to the identification of the nature of the war, this match will clarify objectives and help lead to objectives that are understood by all.

- Unified national leadership is a critical requirement because it goes a long way in ensuring that the American people are not absorbed by partisan politics that may not have the country's best interest at heart, only the next election.

- Strong economy which allows people to focus on important foreign policy issues instead of being sidetracked by important domestic issues, which although important, are not required to ensure the success of the U.S. in the current war.

Critical Vulnerabilities:

- The political will of the elected politicians is arguably the most important critical vulnerability that the U.S. must protect in this war. Arguably, this will is much weaker than the will of the American people because it is primarily interested in being elected (or re-elected) and could allow partisan politics to play an important part in the conduct of the war. These partisan political agendas can be exploited by the enemy to weaken the national leadership from within and thus weaken the American public's will towards the war. Although I am not arguing that the American public is not susceptible to the influence of the media, I would argue that elected officials are even more susceptible to its influence and any smart enemy will attempt to exploit this possibility because it is much easier to influence the opinions of elected officials than it is to influence the opinions and actions of 280 million Americans.

- Arab - Israeli conflict. Although the U.S. is actively engaged in attempting to find a workable solution to this conflict, failure to do so, or even support for a solution that is not satisfying to all sides, can be used as a catalyst to strengthen anti-U.S. feelings in the Muslim world.

- The monetary cost of fighting a war. Although the U.S. is not in danger of running out of money to fight the war the longer the war goes lasts, the higher the costs rise. This situation will have a significant impact on future budget debates and could be used as a vulnerability that can be exploited if our enemy prolongs the war longer than we are willing to pay for it. This situation also directly ties into our ability to pay for executing multiple missions simultaneously as it costs more and more to keep service members engaged in the war.

IX. CONCLUSION

President Bush has said that America is involved in a "war...of global reach...of uncertain duration"[39] and that we will use all aspects of our national power to win this war. Based on our actions since September 11, it is obvious that a great emphasis has been placed on using the military aspect of our national power to win this war. The honest admission from our Commander and Chief that this war will be long and the cost will be high certainly provides the focus that we will need to win this war. I agree with the President's assessment but I would like to make sure that we correctly identify the true nature of the war to ensure that we will not be surprised by the price that we will have to pay to win it.

The U.S. should be prepared to fight this global insurgency with the same mindset that it would use to fight and win a total war and all operational commanders must realize that they are fighting a global war against a radical Islamist insurgency and prepare their forces to deal with such a war in all parts of the world. Even though our enemies will find their motivation in almost any action that we take as a nation, it is still well within our capability to prevent the radical Islamists from winning the uncommitted Muslims to their side. It is also crucial that we are prepared to kill those insurgents who cannot accept the fact that America will not back down from this war. One of the best ways to deal with these individuals is to ensure that the military aspect of national power remains at the forefront of the fight against this insurgency rather than allowing the military effort to be overshadowed by law enforcement practices and policies which will only prolong the duration of the war in the long run.

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[39] National Security Strategy, iii.

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